

NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program for Individuals from Disadvantaged Backgrounds

10-WEEK SUMMER LABORATORY EXPERIENCE

Two kinds of service obligations (forms of payback) are required from each scholarship recipient. After each scholarship year, you must serve for 10 consecutive weeks (during the summer) as a full-time employee in an NIH research laboratory. In addition, after graduation you must serve 1 year (52 weeks) for each year of scholarship support as a full-time NIH employee. You will be paid at established Federal Government rates for this service. Substantial penalties apply to students who fail to meet their service obligations.

NIH summer laboratory experience

After each year of the scholarship, you will be required to work as an employee in an NIH research laboratory for 10 consecutive weeks. This employment occurs during the summer after the receipt of the UGSP award. This service must take place during the months of June, July, and August, with some flexibility to the actual start date in June, depending upon your academic calendar. Students will normally begin service upon completion of the school year. You must serve 10 consecutive weeks. Adjustments in the ending date may be made by the NIH if the obligation is suspended, interrupted, waived, or otherwise delayed.

Determination of laboratory assignments.

Laboratory assignments will be made by matching your interests and skills with research projects at an NIH laboratory. Normally, scholars will visit the NIH campus in early January to meet potential laboratory mentors and be matched for the summer service period.

If you fail to obtain a placement by the deadlines announced by the NIH UGSP, you will be assigned to a position. The NIH reserves the right to make final decisions on all placements to comply with the statutory requirements for the placement of scholars.

Compensation

For your 10-week service, you will be hired as a Federal Government employee (student trainee) and be paid according to the classification level of the job. Depending on your educational level and experience, you will be eligible for positions in the range of General Service (GS) levels GS-3 to GS-5, which pay approximately \$10 to \$13 per hour. As a UGSP student trainee, you will be eligible for both annual and sick leave and may purchase subsidized health insurance.

Housing. The NIH will make arrangements for you to reside in housing shared by other scholars in the Bethesda, Maryland, area. It is strongly recommended that you use this housing to facilitate access to the NIH laboratories, library, computer facilities, lectures, and symposia. These arrangements also will give you better opportunities to network with other scholars, NIH mentors, graduate students, and NIH post-doctoral trainees.

Transportation. Reasonable costs of transportation to and from your undergraduate institution or permanent residence to the NIH will be covered by the UGSP.

NIH mentors

An important goal of the summer research experience is for you to develop a mentoring relationship with an NIH researcher. The one-on-one mentor relationship is considered critical to your development, both professionally and personally. The mentor will provide support and advice to guide your development as a biomedical researcher. The NIH mentoring experience is designed to motivate and encourage you as you plan a career in biomedical research.

Other activities for the 10-week summer program

Courses. To support your professional development, the following courses are required during the 10-week summer experience:

- Laboratory Safety for Summer Research Associates
- Working Safely with HIV and Other Bloodborne Pathogens in the Research Laboratory
- Radiation Safety
- Ethics for Biomedical Researchers

You will also be required to attend sessions of the UGSP Summer Workshop Series. (A schedule will be provided upon arrival at the NIH.) You should anticipate that the workshop series is academically rigorous and that it requires several hours each week, in addition to the time spent in your lab assignment.

Poster Day. You will be required to participate in the NIH Poster Day. This will be an opportunity for you to present information about your laboratory project. Although results may not be available from your experiments, you will be able to present background information, data, and issues that arose during your research.

Keeping a journal. It is suggested that you keep a journal describing your experience at the NIH. At the beginning of the 10-week period, you will be given guidelines for recording your personal and professional development in the journal.

Visit from undergraduate institution mentor. Your faculty mentor or research advisor from your undergraduate institution may visit the NIH campus once during your 10-week laboratory experience. The visit will offer an opportunity for the faculty mentor to learn about your research project, to assess your progress, and to discuss your experiences with your NIH research mentor. It will also provide an opportunity to integrate your NIH research project with your academic program at your undergraduate institution. This visit usually coincides with the activities of NIH Poster Day.

Evaluations and assessments. At the start of the summer program, you will be given an opportunity to conduct a self-assessment of your skills and to set goals for the 10-week experience in terms of professional and personal development.

In addition, assessment and evaluation measurements may be developed in conjunction with your NIH laboratory mentor. The evaluations are intended to provide you with information on your strengths and areas that need further development.